

Slowing the Spread of COVID-19: Guidance for Farmers Markets

May 11, 2020

As our nation works diligently to slow the spread of COVID-19, farmers markets remain vital to ensuring a safe and steady supply of fresh, local foods. **Farmers market operators must do their part to protect the health of the public and vendors.**

It is *not* believed that COVID-19 is spread through food. However, it can be passed between vendors and customers is critical that all participants in farmers markets follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines minimize risk of infection, and commit to the [Tennessee Pledge](#) to help Tennesseans return to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods, and reboot our state's economy.

Following consultation with Governor Bill Lee's Economic Recovery Group, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture makes the following recommendations to farmers market operators and vendors during this health emergency:

- Any person showing signs of illness or who had recent contact with a sick person should stay home. Consider the use of [COVID-19 symptom](#) screening questions and/or signage.
- Implement cleaning and disinfection practices according to [CDC guidelines](#), with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces at least every two hours.
- Vendors and customers should maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others. Increase space between vendors to help promote social distancing.
- No matter if indoors or outside, [CDC recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings in settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Note that children under age two should NOT wear cloth face coverings because of the danger of suffocation.
- Ask customers to only touch items they intend to purchase.
- Sell pre-weighed packaged items to limit food handling.
- Eliminate samples, eating areas, and extra activities until advisable to resume.
- Offer online or phone ordering, as well as curbside or pickup service to minimize contact.
- Require vendors to have hand sanitizer or disinfectant wipes at their booths. If possible, locate handwashing or sanitation stations throughout the market.
- Encourage vendors to disinfect their hands and payment machines after each transaction.
- For indoor markets, limit the number of customers to no more than 50% occupancy based on Tennessee's Building and Fire Code.
- For indoor markets, vendors should wear cloth face coverings and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC.

-More-

- Use plastic barriers between customers and vendors where possible and clean the barriers at least every two hours.
- Upon reporting to the market, ask vendors:
 - Have you been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- Vendors should not be allowed to sell if they answer “yes” to any of the above questions or their temperature exceeds 100.4 Fahrenheit. It is best practice to take temperature with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival.
- Direct any vendors who show signs of illness to leave the premises immediately and to contact their doctor.
- **Communicate and enforce new policies with vendors and the public.**

These recommendations do not replace or supersede any requirements applicable to your operations pursuant to law or regulation. These guidelines are intended as a supplement to assist with safe operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and are subject to change.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is committed to providing the services you count on while also following CDC guidelines to safeguard the health of our staff and citizens. Access the latest information on Tennessee’s response to COVID-19 [online](#) and follow @TNAgriculture on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates.

###